

SEP 1 1965

Today in World Affairs

Consular Pact With Reds —Full Reciprocity Urged

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WASHINGTON.

Reciprocity is supposed to be the formula which the United States and the Soviet Union have in mind in the proposed treaty which permits Russia to open up a number of consular offices in this country and allows America to establish an equal number of consular offices throughout the Soviet Union.

But even if this treaty should be ratified by the U. S. Senate—and there's considerable opposition to it—the question arises as to what privileges the American consulates are to enjoy. Will the United States, for example, be able to distribute anti-Communist literature and to make it available to the Soviet newspapers through the consular offices?

Just a few days ago, the Soviet Embassy in Washington handed out to the press of this country a document typed on its official stationery giving the full text of an "open letter to U. S. President Lyndon B. Johnson" under the title, "We Accuse!" The letter said in part:

"There are moments when one cannot keep silent. Shocked to the depth of the soul by the monstrous massacre of the population of the Negro ghetto in Los Angeles, we are addressing these words to express our indignation, sorrow and pain....

"We say this because we feel and see that the carnage in Los Angeles is no isolated event. The disgraceful trail of violence against the Negro population is growing longer from year to year, and the main thing is: There is no end in sight. How long will this go on? What 'Great Society' is this where people are brought to despair and then in full daylight, before the eyes of the whole world, shot by automatic rifles and machine gun? ...

"The events in Los Angeles cannot be associated in the minds of the people with the barbarous actions of the American soldiers in Viet Nam and the Dominican Republic. In the rumble of the blocks tumbling down in Los Angeles we hear the echo of the walls of the ancient town of Santo Domingo crumbling under the pressure of tanks. The flames flaring up over the Negro ghetto reminded us of the burning towns and villages of Viet Nam....

"Mankind has the right to say at the top of its voice to you, Mr. President: 'Look at Los Angeles. Here you have the "freedom" that the United States wants to impose upon other peoples through bayonets and bombs....

"We, at one with all Soviet people, resolutely demand an end to the outrages. This is the wholehearted demand of all peoples. Mankind's mind, honor and conscience cannot be reconciled with the disgraceful actions of the racists and aggressors."

The letter is signed by the

president of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, by various officers of the same organization and related scientific groups and by prominent members of other professions, including writers, composers and artists. Several are Nobel Prize winners.

Would the American consulate in the Soviet Union be permitted to issue to the Soviet press, and would the Soviet newspapers print any part of, an "open letter" to the Soviet Premier narrating the atrocities that have been committed during the last few years against innocent persons who have attempted to move from East Germany to West Germany over the Berlin wall? Would the Soviet government allow, even in the satellite countries, the issuance of any document criticizing the Soviet government comparable either in tone or in substance to what has just been distributed to the American press under the auspices of the "embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics"?

There are plenty of people in the United States who would like to express themselves and address not only the Soviet government but the Soviet people. Would the Moscow government let this material ever see the light of day? Could it even be sent to the newspapers of the Soviet Union? Would American consular officials attempting to do this be promptly arrested and told to leave the country?

So there's every reason why the proposed consular treaty should be examined carefully and perhaps reservations or amendments made to it guaranteeing that the United States shall have "equal rights" in Russia on a par with the privileges granted the Soviet officials both in the consulates and in the embassy in this country.

There is no lack of subjects on which academic and professional people in America would like to write "open letters" to the Russian people. Racial discrimination, for instance, is practiced, and certain religions are persecuted inside Russia. Tourists are frequently arrested and accused of espionage. Nobody can travel without being kept under surveillance, either by a tourist officer or some other agent of the government.

Unless the principle of complete reciprocity can be guaranteed, the consular treaty is doomed to rejection by the Senate.

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